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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 28 September 2006, at 11 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Acharya ..... (Nepal)

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06-54210 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Organization of work (A/C.4/61/1; A/C.4/61/L.1)

1. **The Chairman** drew the attention of the Committee to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly contained in the report of the General Committee (A/61/250) regarding the work of the Main Committees, including those contained in General Assembly decision 34/401 and resolutions 58/126 and 58/316.

2. In order to make full use of the time and conference services made available to the Committee, he intended to convene and adjourn the Committee's meetings promptly. In that connection, he hoped that all delegations would continue to make a special effort to enable the Committee to begin its meetings on time and improve its utilization of the available conference services. He would convene a meeting only when there were sufficient speakers on the list for that meeting.

3. He recalled that the Assembly had decided to continue its practice, during the current session, of departing from the rule that one quarter of the members must be present for a Main Committee meeting to be declared open and debate to begin. With respect to explanations of vote, rights of reply and points of order, the Committee would conduct its work strictly in accordance with paragraphs 6 to 10 of General Assembly decision 34/401, contained in document A/520/Rev.15, annex VI. In line with the time limits for explanations of vote and rights of reply, points of order should be limited to five minutes. On the basis of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 49/221 B, he suggested that statements by members of the Committee during the general debate should not exceed 10 minutes, or 15 minutes in the case of those speaking on behalf of several delegations.

4. *It was so decided.*

5. **The Chairman** said that the procedure regarding concluding statements would be in line with paragraph 17 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby such statements could be made only by presiding officers. With respect to resolutions, he drew attention to paragraph 32 of decision 34/401 and to recommendation 3 (f) of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts (A/41/49). In that connection, and in accordance with paragraph 5 of its resolution 48/264, the General Assembly had encouraged Member States to exercise restraint in making proposals requesting new reports of the Secretary-General, and in paragraph 69 of its resolution 57/270 B, it had requested that resolutions should be short and should focus more on action-oriented operative paragraphs.

6. With regard to programme budget implications and rule 153 of the rules of procedure, he noted that the General Assembly had drawn the attention of the Committee to paragraph 12 of its decision 34/401, which stated that it was imperative for the Main Committees to allow sufficient time for the preparation of the estimate of expenditures by the Secretariat and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. The Assembly had also decided that a minimum period of 48 hours should be allowed between the submission of a proposal and a vote on it involving expenditure. That period would allow the Secretary-General to prepare and present the related statement of administrative and financial implications and would help avoid the cancellation of meetings and the postponement of consideration of items.

7. He drew attention to document A/C.4/61/1, which contained a letter dated 18 September 2006, addressed to him from the President of the General Assembly, informing him that at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 13 September, the Assembly had decided to allocate 15 items to the Committee for its consideration, and to document A/C.4/61/L.1, which contained the Committee's programme of work with a proposed timetable.

8. He recalled that according to paragraph 4 (k), of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316, agenda item 28, entitled "University for Peace", would be considered by the Committee, starting with the current session, on a triennial basis. According to paragraph 3 (b) of section C of the annex to the same resolution, the Committee would, at the end of the session, adopt a provisional programme of work for the next session. Agenda item 110, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", had been allocated to the Committee solely for the purpose of approving the programme of work for the Committee's next session. Agenda item 118, entitled "Programme planning", had been allocated to all the Main Committees and the plenary of the General Assembly, in case the Assembly decided to allocate any report

submitted under the item to the Committee. Thus far he had not received any information in that regard.

9. The Committee would continue with the practice of convening panels and holding interactive dialogues under agenda item 30, entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space", agenda item 31, entitled "United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East", agenda item 33, entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects" and agenda item 34, entitled "Questions relating to information".

10. In accordance with the decisions taken in connection with the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, particularly resolutions 56/509 and 58/126, the Committee would deal with agenda item 5, entitled "Election of the officers of the Main Committees" about three months before the next session.

11. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the programme of work and the timetable contained in document A/C.4/61/L.1.

12. *It was so decided.*

13. **The Chairman** said that, as at previous sessions, the Committee would set up a working group of the whole to prepare draft resolutions for submission under item 30, entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space". He took it that the Committee agreed to establish the group.

14. *It was so decided.*

15. **The Chairman** noted that, in approving its programme of work and timetable, the Committee had decided to hold one general debate covering all agenda items relating to decolonization, namely items 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39. That decision would enable Committee members to speak on any or all of the agenda items at any meeting devoted to the topic. He suggested that the deadline for submission of the draft proposals on the aforementioned decolonization agenda items should be set for Tuesday, 3 October 2006, at 6 p.m.

16. *It was so decided.*

Requests for hearings (aide-memoire 01/06)

17. **The Chairman** drew attention to aide-memoire 01/06, which contained 44 requests for hearings on the questions of Gibraltar, Guam, New Caledonia and Western Sahara under agenda item 39. He suggested that the requests should be circulated as Committee documents for consideration at a subsequent meeting.

18. *It was so decided.*

19. **The Chairman** said that he had also received communications from the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, who wished to make a statement under agenda item 39, and from a representative of the Government of the Virgin Islands, who wished to make a statement under agenda item 37. The statements would be scheduled accordingly.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.